AFTER-IMAGES

ERIC K. YUE

A half-naked girl runs through the woods at night. Glistening with sweat, she looks back to see if the killer is close. Shafts of cobalt-blue light cut through the low-lying fog, and a loud shriek echoes in the distance. The image is grainy; dust and dirt sparkle on the old film print, the pock-marks of the film plane revealing the plasticity of the image as a surface. Like seeing the grime on a window pane, we peer through a hazy portal. These images summon a time and place within our formative years as a culture—a classic eighties horror scenario.

Much of my generation encountered classic eighties horror on VHS—a beat-up positive print rescanned, reframed to 4:3, burned to tape. We consumed an altered version of the original, printed and reprinted. These amalgamations produced the horror "look," of the time, a feeling of familiarity more than a faithful reproduction. *Basement movies.*

These basement movies are remembered images, shaped by iterations of re-photography. What we take to be "that movie" is a residue of prior reproduction.

I'm ashamed to admit that I'd only seen *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974) in its entirety a few weeks before we started shooting *Camp Miasma*. But I knew scenes from it. I knew the poster. And I knew the iconic ending. A few times, Jane and I tried to get the 4K stream to work, but we settled on the 720p version because the internet was too slow.

There is no "real" *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* sitting behind all of its iterations, remasters, and recolorings. A film exists through its screenings—each one a different print, a different bit-rate, a different audience, a different context that shapes its remembrance. They live in mythology, in compressed YouTube clips, in screenshot databases, and, at times, in obscurity.

What we carry of these films are fragments of what they became as cultural objects. If what we carry is not the film itself but the film as it lived in us, my task as cinematographer on *Camp Miasma* is not replication but recompositing. Not retrieving the image that was, but building the image that was remembered. We didn't watch any *Friday the 13th* films during prep, but Jane, Willy, and I managed to get through a decent chunk of the 6.5-hour documentary *Crystal Lake Memories* (Daniel Farrands, 2013), an in-depth telling of the franchise. We arrived on set with the aroma of these pictures more than the recipe for them. We shot on film, used old lenses, but we also made choices that didn't belong—glass matte paintings, a technique from the Golden Age of cinema rather than eighties horror. The images became a stew of different eras.

The word "nostalgia" has come up a lot in responses to *I Saw The TV Glow*. I find myself wincing at the word. Nostalgic images elicit pleasure in the return to form, in the precision of period-specific details. There is a comfort in the recognition of the familiar with minimal alteration. I like to think of the images we've created in both films as "after-images." They are the mind's eye of what we share as media from our youth; a distorted memory, a deliberate kind of *misrecognition*.

Degradation and resolution are storytelling devices in both *TV Glow* and *Camp Miasma*. In *Camp Miasma*, grain and texture locate us and displace us; we feel when we are inside a borrowed movie and when we are inside our own, oscillating between affective registers. With colorist Mikey Rossiter, we played with the textural

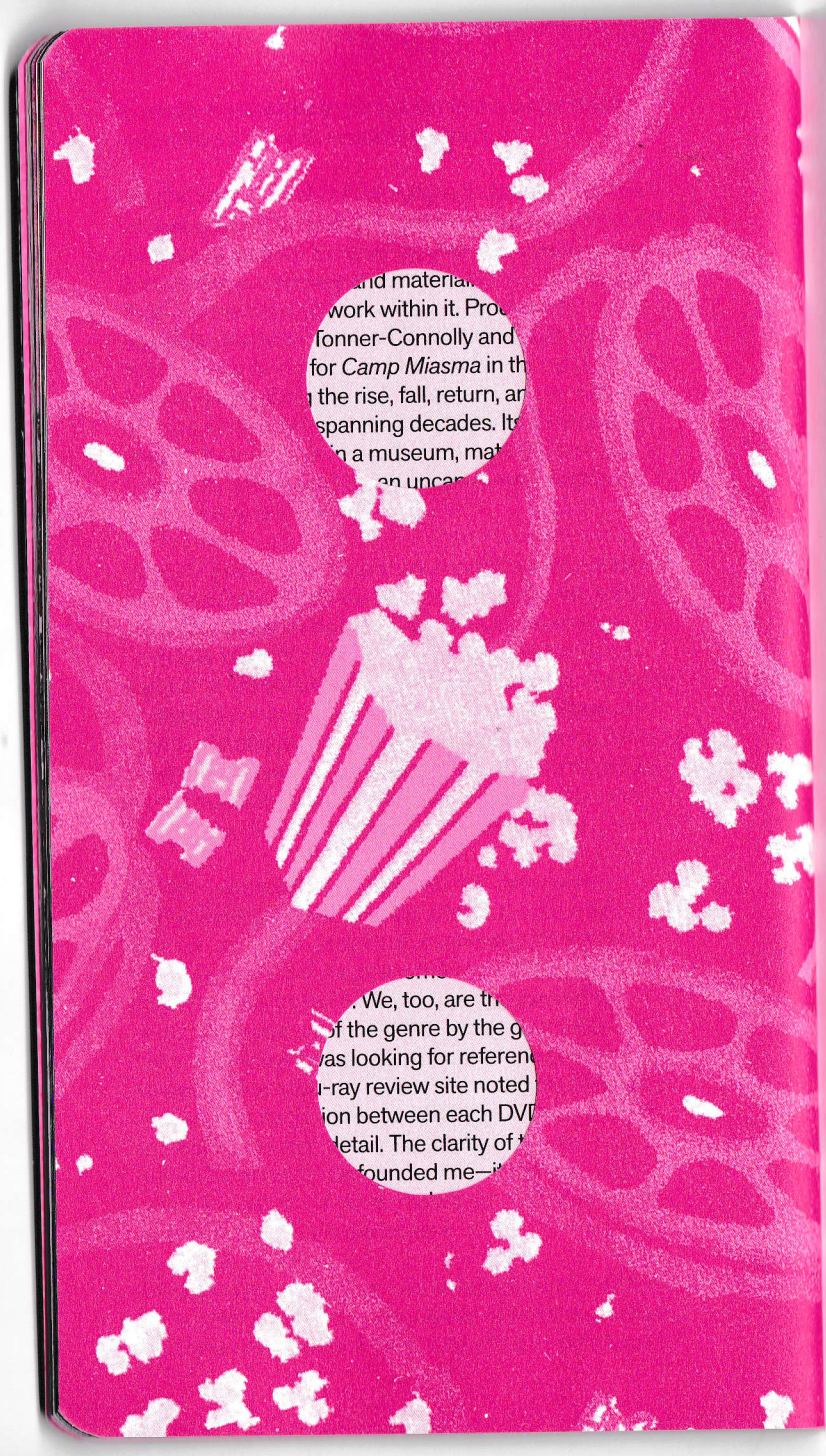
elasticity that becomes part of the film's subjecthood, rather than a passive emulation of style.

What is so special about working with Jane is their love of obscurities, the fandom, the weird histories of specific films and directors, the lore. They observe the discrepancy between memory and materiality, and encourage their collaborators to work within it. Production designers Brandon Tonner-Connolly and Matt Hyland built a whole world for *Camp Miasma* in the opening title credits, showcasing the rise, fall, return, and re-return of a fictional franchise spanning decades. Its remnants are displayed as artifacts in a museum, materialized into fragments and mutations, an uncanny reproduction of something vaguely familiar.

Younger generations didn't fully live with the Blockbuster Home-Video experience, the Tuesday deals, the faded *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987) cutout in the window. VHS was phased out by the early 2000s, replaced first by mail-at-home DVDs and then by streaming. For them, neither tape nor disc was ever the dominant medium—they came of age in an immaterial digital culture. The aesthetic of basement movies arrives already detached from its source—a marker without remembrance, the feeling of a thing that predates their experience.

But my generation is no different. We came of age during the era of the franchise reboot, the post-9/11 "serious" and slick versions of the campy classics. We never experienced the phenomena of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* in 1974. We, too, are the subject of re-memorialization of the genre by the generation before us. When I was looking for reference images of Hooper's film, a Blu-ray review site noted the difference of color and resolution between each DVD release with incredible scientific detail. The clarity of the 4K restoration images confounded me—it did not match what I thought the film had looked like. But maybe this was never how it actually looked.

Perhaps I am writing from a place of nostalgia. Not for the aesthetic but for the experience of watching, before we knew what we know now. Going to a friend's house



after school to watch *The Evil Dead* (Sam Raimi, 1981) before it had to be returned—the scratches and fuzz of a VHS tape, deteriorating after every watch, not knowing when we could watch it again. Not knowing what we were about to see, or how it would live in us. I think about the nature of images when I collaborate with Jane—aesthetically, of course, but beyond this, how we are shaped by such images before we have the language for our interiority. In all of Jane's work, the screen is the mediator between the past, present, and future. Us filmmakers sit on both sides of it, as consumers and creators of the medium, deciding what to make of what made us.

The most joyous part of making *Camp Miasma* was the people I got to work with. Caddy, Sepi, Willy, and I drove to set together every day, our mini-family, taking turns on the 6 a.m. coffee run. Our first weekend off, we did group karaoke with the cast and crew. Jane chose "Stan" by Eminem.

Today was our last day of color, and we don't yet know what *Camp Miasma* will become. What remains for me are the memories of making it. For now, they seem vivid, without the dust or specks. Or perhaps they are still developing; still submerged in the bath, silver halide crystals suspended in a state of latency. Before the images we made no longer belong to us, before *Camp*

Miasma is released into the world, they seem to resolve in my mind, crystalline and sharp, knowing that together we made our own mis-remembrances.

Orange sunlight cuts through the morning fog. Dawn after an overnight shoot. Blankets of fake snow cover the set for the first time. We made winter in June. Jane and I look at each other in amazement: *Now* it's a movie.

SEPI MASHIAHOF is a transgender Iranian-American filmmaker, writer, and musician. Her work chases catharsis through exploring the beauty and brutality of queer existence in reflection with cultural diaspora. In addition to the short films of her "Ether Trilogy" (*Love You Forever, SMOOTH, Humans Are Shapes*), she has directed DIY music videos for friends like Divide and Dissolve, Sehseiyah, and Joyride! Sepi is an SFFILM Filmhouse resident and a recurring collaborator with Jane Schoenbrun, working as their assistant on their films.

BRANDON TONNER-CONNOLLY is an award-winning TV and film Production Designer. He most recently designed Sterlin Harjo and Ethan Hawke's *The Lowdown* for FX and Jane Schoenbrun's *Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma* (2026). His other credits include Taika Waititi and Sterlin Harjo's Peabody Award-winning, Emmy-nominated *Reservation Dogs,* for which he won an Art Directors Guild Award, as well as features *The Bad Batch* (Ana Lily Amirpour, 2016), *The Big Sick* (Michael Showalter, 2017), *Brigsby Bear* (Dave McCary, 2017), and *I Saw The TV Glow* (Jane Schoenbrun, 2024).

MATT HYLAND is an award-winning Production Designer and Art Director. His work began in Detroit with photography, documentary, and commercial production, and then shifted to narrative film and television design after relocating to Chicago. Matt won the Art Directors Guild Award in 2024 for the FX series *Reservation Dogs*, and recently designed the upcoming *Trash Mountain* (Kris Rey, 2026), starring Caleb Hearon. He worked as the Co-Designer for Adam Salky's Netflix thriller *Intrusion* (2021) and Jane Schoenbrun's *Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma*.

ERIC K. YUE is a cinematographer born and raised in Flushing, Queens. He received his BFA in filmmaking from New York University Tisch School of the Arts and his MFA in Fine Art from the University of Pennsylvania. His ongoing collaboration with Jane Schoenbrun includes *I Saw the TV Glow*, *Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma*, and Lucy Dacus's *Night Shift* music video. His other feature credits include *The Giant* (David Raboy, 2019), *A Thousand and One* (A.V. Rockwell, Sundance Grand Jury Prize 2023), *Atropia* (Hailey Benton Gates, Sundance Grand Jury Prize 2025), and the upcoming *The Last Day* (Rachel Rose, 2026), starring Alicia Vikander and Wagner Moura.

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